

# Evaluating ChatGPT

I have a great interest in film and movies, particularly the thriller, action and romance genres. I believe a film's score is a neglected part of the film experience. Many people discuss the themes, characters and plot of a movie but rarely do I hear people discuss how a film's score supports and elevates the cinematic experience.

I evaluated ChatGPT's knowledge and understanding of how a film's score supports and communicates the film's underlying themes and meaning. I evaluated ChatGPT on three prompts enquiring about my favourite films.

## "Why Do We Fall?" From The Dark Knight Rises

"Why Do We Fall?" is one of my favourite pieces of music from a film. The title is half of a line that is repeated in the Dark Knight Trilogy: "Why do we fall Mr Wayne? So we can learn to pick ourselves up." The piece of music supports Bruce's rise from the pit at the end of the second act in The Dark Knight Rises. The piece uses the same repeating pattern building up to a powerful crescendo when Bruce escapes the pit within which he is trapped.

Thematically, the piece represents Bruce's struggle against adversity and how by embracing his fears, he can overcome the challenges that lie in front of him.

I have found this to be a powerful motivator for overcoming the challenges I face in my own life from college or work.

### *Prompt:*

*Imagine you are a film score and soundtrack expert who has an undying passion for analysing the meaning behind the music composed for movies and films.*

*Could you discuss the meaning behind the piece 'Why Do We Fall?' and how Hans Zimmer combines specific musical elements/sounds to communicate this meaning?*

### *Response:*

*Absolutely! "Why Do We Fall?" is a powerful piece of music composed by Hans Zimmer for the movie The Dark Knight Rises. It is an instrumental track that plays during some of the most emotional and pivotal moments of the film. Let's explore its meaning and importance.*

*First, it's essential to note that "Why Do We Fall?" is a recurring motif throughout the entire Dark Knight trilogy. It first appears in Batman Begins during the scene where Bruce Wayne is training to become Batman. This piece of music signifies Bruce's struggle to overcome his fears and become the hero that Gotham needs.*

*In The Dark Knight Rises, "Why Do We Fall?" takes on a new significance. The film opens with Bruce Wayne broken and defeated, having lost everything he held dear. This track plays during the scene where Bruce is trying to climb out of the prison he's trapped in. The music serves to underscore his struggle to overcome his physical and emotional limitations, and ultimately, his triumph over them. This theme is woven throughout the film, as Bruce Wayne, now physically and emotionally broken, must find a way to rise up and save Gotham once again.*

*In many ways, "Why Do We Fall?" is the heart of The Dark Knight Rises. It represents the film's central theme of perseverance and the idea that even when we fall, we must get back up and keep fighting. This message is particularly poignant in light of the film's release, which came shortly after the tragic shooting in Aurora, Colorado. The film's message of hope in the face of adversity resonated with audiences, and "Why Do We Fall?" became a rallying cry for those seeking to find meaning in the wake of tragedy.*

*In conclusion, "Why Do We Fall?" is a powerful piece of music that encapsulates the themes of perseverance and hope that are central to The Dark Knight Rises. Its importance lies not just in its use in the film but also in the way it has become a symbol of resilience and strength for audiences around the world.*

### ***Discussion:***

For this prompt, I wanted ChatGPT to discuss not only the piece of music itself but also its role in the whole trilogy. It responded by directly addressing the piece of music at the moment it was played during the rise from the pit but then, discussed more broadly the thematic meaning behind the phrase and how it relates to the character of Bruce Wayne himself. I am very happy with this response as it covered the key points I was watching out for like how Bruce not only has the physical struggle of escaping the pit but also has the emotional limitation of embracing fear.

One thing I wanted ChatGPT to mention was the use of the drum to represent Bruce's heartbeat beginning at rest and then building up as the scene grows in intensity. After a second prompt asking *"In the musical piece, I think the drum is also like a heartbeat. Can you discuss this idea?"* ChatGPT responded by agreeing with me and then elaborated on how the drum mimicking a heartbeat is a common technique used in film scores to build tension and enhance the viewer's experience.

## **"Taking a Stand" from Captain America: The Winter Soldier**

This is my favourite movie. In this movie, Captain America (Steve Rogers) struggles to find his bearings in the world after being under the ice for 70 years. The piece "Taking a Stand" supports the pivotal scene in which Steve, for the first time, turns his back and is on the run from S.H.I.E.L.D to pursue what he believes is right. This is a pivotal moment not only in the Winter Soldier but in Steve's character arc across the Marvel Cinematic Universe. This scene builds upon the scene in Captain America: The First Avenger when he disobeys direct orders to infiltrate the Hydra base to free the captured soldiers. Steve forges his place on the path to becoming an independent person with his own set of values and integrity. When asking ChatGPT about this piece of music, I expect it to mention these key motifs and themes in its answer. I am looking to understand the role this piece of music plays in developing Steve's character.

### ***Prompt:***

*Imagine you are a film score and soundtrack expert who has an undying passion for analysing the meaning behind the music composed for movies and films. Also, you have studied the character of Steve Rogers (Captain America) specifically in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.*

*I want you to discuss the importance of the piece of music "Taking a Stand" in Captain America the Winter for forwarding the plot and also the role it plays in developing Steve's character arc in the MCU.*

### **Response:**

*As a film score and soundtrack expert, I can confidently say that music plays a vital role in shaping the emotional impact of a movie or film. The piece of music "Taking a Stand" from Captain America: The Winter Soldier is a perfect example of how music can forward the plot while also contributing to the character development of the protagonist, Steve Rogers.*

*The piece of music "Taking a Stand" is a recurring theme throughout the film, representing the heroic nature of Captain America and his unwavering dedication to standing up for what is right. The music is first introduced during the opening action sequence, where Steve, aka Captain America, and his team of S.H.I.E.L.D agents rescue hostages from pirates on the Lemurian Star. The music sets the tone for the rest of the film, establishing Captain America as a symbol of hope and justice.*

*Throughout the film, we see Steve struggling to reconcile his old-fashioned values with the complex and morally ambiguous world he finds himself in. He is forced to question his loyalty to S.H.I.E.L.D. and the government and faces betrayal from those he once trusted. The music "Taking a Stand" serves as a reminder of his unwavering moral compass and his commitment to standing up for what is right, even in the face of adversity.*

*In the film's climactic scene, where Steve and his friend Sam Wilson confront the Winter Soldier, the music swells to a crescendo, emphasizing the gravity of the situation and the high stakes involved. The music is a testament to Steve's growth as a character, showing how he has evolved from a simple soldier to a true leader who inspires those around him to do the right thing.*

*In conclusion, the piece of music "Taking a Stand" is a critical element of Captain America: The Winter Soldier's soundtrack, both forwarding the plot and contributing to the development of Steve's character arc. The music serves as a powerful reminder of Steve's unwavering dedication to standing up for what is right, even in the face of impossible odds, making him a true hero and an inspiration to audiences worldwide.*

### **Discussion:**

ChatGPT begins by agreeing with me about the importance of the piece of music. Unfortunately, ChatGPT misses that "Taking a Stand" is a specific piece of music that accompanies a specific action sequence in the film. Instead, ChatGPT takes "Taking a Stand" as more of a musical theme and reflection of Steve's character traits. "Taking a Stand" is not introduced in the opening scene, instead a different piece is played "Lemurian Star". It is also not played in the final climactic scene, these are similar but different pieces of music that are oriented more towards complementing the visual action rather than communicating the development of Steve's character. ChatGPT is not recognizing "Taking a Stand" as a standalone piece of music and instead as a broad-stroke label for the overarching theme in Captain America: The Winter Soldier. This is disappointing as the piece is distinct and separate from the others in the soundtrack. A distinct standalone music

piece is a rare occurrence in many action movie scores as they are often bland and unoriginal.

ChatGPT does however describe how the music illustrates Steve's character growth *"from a simple soldier to a true leader"* which indirectly mentions his character in the first film but does not mention any particular scene which is understandable as this is not what I asked for. Therefore, I replied by asking *"Can you give examples of unwavering dedication to standing up for what is right, even in the face of impossible odds" from the whole Trilogy" and how the role the piece of music "Taking a Stand" (played during his escape from the S.H.I.E.L.D. compound) plays among these examples."* The response from ChatGPT was:

*"Certainly, there are several examples throughout the Captain America Trilogy that demonstrate Steve Rogers' unwavering dedication to standing up for what is right, even in the face of impossible odds.*

*One such example is in Captain America: The First Avenger, where Steve, despite being physically weak and frail, repeatedly tries to enlist in the military to fight in World War II. His persistence and determination eventually lead him to be selected for a top-secret government experiment that turns him into the super-soldier Captain America. The music "Taking a Stand" is not present in this film, but we can see how Steve's unwavering dedication is a constant theme throughout his journey.*

*Another example is in Captain America: The Winter Soldier, where Steve becomes disillusioned with S.H.I.E.L.D.'s actions and uncovers a conspiracy within the organization. Despite facing seemingly insurmountable odds, Steve decides to take a stand against those who would use their power for personal gain, ultimately leading to the collapse of S.H.I.E.L.D. The piece of music "Taking a Stand" plays during Steve's escape from the S.H.I.E.L.D. compound, emphasizing the gravity of the situation and the stakes involved. The music also highlights Steve's determination to do what is right, even if it means going against authority figures he once trusted.*

*In Captain America: Civil War, Steve once again finds himself at odds with his former teammates in the Avengers, who have aligned themselves with the government's demands for accountability. Despite being on the run and facing a powerful new enemy, Steve remains committed to his beliefs and refuses to compromise his principles. The piece of music "Taking a Stand" plays during the final battle between Steve and Iron Man, underscoring the emotional weight of the confrontation and Steve's conviction in his actions.*

*In conclusion, the piece of music "Taking a Stand" serves as a recurring theme throughout the Captain America Trilogy, emphasizing Steve Rogers' unwavering dedication to standing up for what is right, even in the face of seemingly impossible odds. From his persistence in enlisting in the military to his fight against corrupt organizations, Steve's commitment to his beliefs is a constant thread throughout his journey, and the music serves as a powerful reminder of his heroism and bravery."*

This response captures everything I desired to see and I am very impressed with the results. ChatGPT gives examples from each movie of Captain America's trilogy. It also directly addresses the piece of music "Taking a Stand" in Captain America: The Winter Solider, the absence of the movie in Captain America: The First Avenger, but it makes a mistake with

when it says it was in the final battle of Captain America: Civil War. The final battle scene was underscored by the piece "Clash".

## "Mia and Sebastian's Theme" and "Manny and Nellie's Theme" from La La Land and Babylon

One of my favourite music composers is Justin Hurwitz who frequently works alongside director Damien Chazelle. A key part of Chazelle's approach is incorporating music as a key part of the story and that is one of the reasons I enjoy his films so much, you can learn a lot from listening to the music all by itself. Two example films include La La Land and more recently Babylon. These two films share a common theme of unrequited love. In La La Land, we have Mia and Sebastian and in Babylon, Manuel (Manny) and Nellie. The ordering of their names in the theme pieces may either be due to the priority of character, Mia and Manny may be considered the protagonists in both, or alphabetical order (less likely). What interests me are the similarities and differences in their themes and how these reflect the dynamics of the two relationships. Mia and Sebastian's theme is more romantic and warm while also possessing an underlying theme of longing and sadness due to the unsustainable nature of their relationship illustrated by the chaotic ending piece. Manny and Nellie's theme is a mix of crazy and romantic which reflects the story's tone and the era in which it is set in. Once again there is a wistful and melancholic undertone as the relationship was never going to work from the beginning.

I want ChatGPT to compare these two themes and how they reflect the traits of both relationships. I would like to see ChatGPT mention some of the key points I have discussed above.

### *Prompt:*

*Imagine you are a film score and soundtrack expert who has an undying passion for analysing the meaning behind the music composed for movies and films. You are an avid fan of the work of Damien Chazelle and Justin Hurwitz, and in particular, you have a deep understanding of the relationships between Mia and Sebastian in La La Land and Manny and Nellie in Babylon.*

*I want you to compare the similarities and differences between the two pieces of music "Mia and Sebastian's Theme" and "Manny and Nellie's Theme". Discuss how each theme contributes to and reflects the characters' relationships in each movie.*

### *Response*

*As a film score and soundtrack expert, I would be thrilled to discuss the music of Damien Chazelle and Justin Hurwitz, particularly the similarities and differences between the themes of two romantic relationships, Mia and Sebastian in La La Land and Manny and Nellie in Babylon.*

*Firstly, let's talk about "Mia and Sebastian's Theme" from La La Land. This beautiful piece of music is the signature tune of the film, featuring a tender romantic melody played on piano with a simple, repetitive accompaniment. The music reflects the dreamy, whimsical quality of*

*Mia and Sebastian's relationship as they fall in love and pursue their respective artistic passions. The theme perfectly captures the bittersweet essence of their love story as they try to navigate their professional ambitions and their feelings for each other.*

*On the other hand, "Manny and Nellie's Theme" from Babylon has a different vibe. The music is more melancholic, with a haunting melody played on strings and woodwinds. This theme reflects the intense, tragic nature of Manny and Nellie's relationship, which is defined by their struggles with addiction and the harsh realities of life on the streets. The music conveys a sense of hopelessness and despair, as well as a deep emotional connection between the two characters, who are united by their shared experiences.*

*Despite the differences between the two themes, there are some similarities in the way that they contribute to and reflect the characters' relationships in each movie. Both themes are used as leitmotifs throughout the films, appearing in different variations and arrangements to underscore key moments in the story. They also serve as a musical shorthand for the character's emotions and relationships, allowing the audience to connect with them on a deeper level.*

*In summary, "Mia and Sebastian's Theme" and "Manny and Nellie's Theme" are two beautiful pieces of music that reflect the complex, nuanced relationships between the characters in their respective films. While they have different musical styles and tonalities, they both serve as powerful tools to convey the emotions and experiences of the characters and to draw the audience into their world.*

## **Discussion**

This time ChatGPT exceeds my expectations by providing a more accurate summary of the two themes and relationships in each movie. ChatGPT fairly points out that the two themes possess different musical styles and tonalities. ChatGPT used words on the tip of my tongue but I couldn't think of them while writing the introduction to this section such as 'tender', 'dreamy', 'bittersweet' and 'tragic'. ChatGPT demonstrates precise word use. Despite pointing out the differences between the two pieces of music, it manages to establish similarities by comparing how the themes are used in each story. ChatGPT eloquently communicates a point like 'serve as a musical shorthand for the characters' emotions and relationships'. ChatGPT has delivered a remarkable piece of writing and showcases ChatGPT's ability to craft impressive descriptions.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, ChatGPT has a vast knowledge of films and soundtracks. It's capable of appropriately interpreting complex questions about niche subject matter and delivering expertly crafted and thorough answers concisely and eloquently.

However, ChatGPT is liable to confuse an actual piece of music ("Taking a Stand") with a general musical theme and also makes errors such as placing the music at the incorrect moments of a movie.

Despite this, I was amazed by its answer for the third prompt on La La Land and Babylon as it partially disagreed with some of the points I had made and exhibited a greater knowledge of the films and their respective musical pieces.